

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT:**

Please replace the paragraph (Abstract) beginning at page 54, line 4 with the following rewritten version:

A production process for heat-expanded microspheres ~~comprising~~ includes the step of providing a gaseous fluid containing heat-expandable microspheres, which ~~comprise~~ includes a shell of thermoplastic resin and a blowing agent encapsulated therein having a boiling point not higher than the softening point of the thermoplastic resin and have an average particle size from 1 to 100 $\mu$ m~~[[,]]~~. ~~feeding the~~ The gaseous fluid is fed through a gas-introducing tube having a dispersion nozzle on its outlet ~~and being~~ that is fixed inside a conduit having a hot gas flow~~[[, and]]~~ flowing therethrough. ~~A emitting a jet of the gaseous fluid is emitted~~ through the dispersion nozzle~~[[; a step wherein the]]~~. Further, the gaseous fluid is collided on a collision plate fixed under the dispersion nozzle so as to disperse the heat-expandable microspheres in the hot gas flow~~[[; and a step wherein]]~~. The ~~[[the]]~~ dispersed heat-expandable microspheres are heated in the hot gas flow at a temperature not lower than their expansion initiating temperature and thus expanded. ~~The production process results in minimum difference in the variation coefficient of particle size distribution between the microspheres before and after heat expansion, slight ratio of raw microspheres and slightly expanded microspheres contained in resultant heat-expanded microspheres, and suppressed formation of aggregated microspheres.~~